(b) Yes, India is offering quality medical treatment at a cost much lower than that of other countries of the world, particularly in the field of cardiology, cardiac surgery, joint replacement, ophthalmology, oncology, pathology, Indian system of medicines etc.

(c) The Government of India has constituted a task force in January, 2004 to promote India as a health destination for persons across the globe so as to gainfully utilize the health care expertise and infrastructure available in the country.

(d) and (e) Countries from the Middle-East are keenly looking to collaborate with Indian companies in the health care sector as India is favourable placed in terms of logistics and the cost competitiveness in health care.

Indian hospitals in the private sector like Wockhardt and Apollo are looking to set-up tele-medicine units, hospitals and clinics in Middle-East countries as well as are contemplating patients transfer from Middle-East to Mumbai and Bangalore.

Miserable condition of patients in AIIMS

†586. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the condition of the patients in new emergency ward of AIIMS is miserable and there is only one X-Ray machine which remains available for one or two days only;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there is shortage of blankets and bed-sheets and the condition of stretchers is very bad;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to solve these problems so that better services could be provided to the patients?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKALAKSHMI): (a) No, Sir. The new emergency ward at AIIMS is fully functional. It has a total of 60 beds and at any given time about 6-8 doctors, 8-12 nurses and all required

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

medicines and consumables are available to take care of emergency patients. The patient X-ray facility in the emergency is available round-the-clock throughout the year.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. There is no shortage of blankets and bed sheets in the emergency ward. The emergency has a total of 67 stretcher trolleys and all the trolleys are regularly maintained and are in good condition

(d) Professor In-charge Emergency Services and the Medical Superintendent of the Institute regularly visit emergency ward and take action as required from time to time to upkeep arid upgrade patient care services.

Convention on tobacco control

587. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA. Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have adopted a framework convention on tobacco control of the World Health Assembly and that ratified by India;

(b) how adoption of this resolution helps Government to regulate advertisements from foreign tobacco firms;and

(c) the total number of countries which have ratified this resolution, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) India signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) on 10th September, 2003 and later on ratified the same on 5th February 2004.

(b) The convention calls for a comprehensive ban on cross-border advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products originating from its territory. In this respect, within the period of five years after entry into force of this convention for that Party, each Party shall undertake appropriate legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures.

(c) 24 countries have so far ratified the FCTC.